



Joint Information Center
Disaster Field Office
Newark, DE



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News Release

Disaster assistance briefings scheduled for officials

Newark, Delaware – President Bush recently declared New Castle County eligible for federal assistance with its infrastructure damage caused by tropical depression Jeanne. Two briefings for potential applicants for the assistance will take place Friday, December 3 and Monday, December 6. The Friday briefing will be held at the New Castle County Police Headquarters on Route 13 in the Sweeney Conference Room between 1 and 3 p.m. The second briefing will be conducted on Dec 6 at Wilmington Manor Station 32, Routes 13 and 40 between 7 and 9 p.m. These briefings are intended for local officials concerned with public damages and overtime costs.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) share of assistance is 75 percent of the eligible cost for emergency measures and permanent restoration. The State determines how the non-federal share (25 percent) is divided with the applicants.

The FEMA program is called public assistance (PA). PA grants are awarded to help pay for emergency protective measures such as police overtime, debris clearance to open vital roads and rights-of-way and removal of threats to public safety. Grants are also awarded for permanent repairs to roads, water control facilities, public buildings and public utilities. This work involves restoring infrastructure to its pre-disaster condition and can range from minor repairs to total replacement.

FEMA's PA Program encourages protection from future damage by providing assistance for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery period. "Site-specific" retrofitting or other steps taken to protect against future damage might be included in the work, if the applicant can demonstrate a favorable cost-benefit ratio.

To be eligible for PA, the damage must exceed \$1,000, the work must be required as a result of the declared disaster, it must be located within the designated disaster area and the repair or restoration must be the responsibility of the applicant. Also, insurance must be deducted and assistance cannot be available from any other federal agency.

Examples of eligible private nonprofit facilities include electric and water utilities, custodial care and medical organizations and educational institutions. Native American nations and organizations

also are eligible recipients. Eligible nonprofits must hold current federal tax-exempt status and some may be required to apply with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

(more)

FEMA issues public assistance grants directly to the state, which reimburses applicants as sub-grantees. It generally takes between four and six weeks after approval of projects to process grants and get checks out to the applicants.

On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.

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More disaster information is available on the Internet at www.fema.gov or www.dema.state.pa.us. Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability or economic status. Anyone who believes he or she has been discriminated against should call FEMA at 1-800-621-3362 (TTY 1-800-462-7585).